

# Victorian Studies Association of Ontario



## May 2010

1. [The President's Message](#)
2. [ACCUTE Panels of interest to Victorianists](#)
3. [Forum](#)
4. [Summary of VSAO 2010 Papers](#)

### **The President's Message**

It is the cusp of Summer and a perfect time for thinking of the past year, catching up, and planning ahead. I am pleased to report that VSAO continues to thrive in every way. This winter Cannon Schmitt delivered an excellent Evening Lecture on Conrad, tides, and sailing; VSAO members also joined the Victorian Studies Network at York to hear Maureen Jennings and Yannick Bisson in a lively evening on detective fiction. This year's annual conference, "Victorian Icons and Iconography," was held for the second year in a row at York University's Glendon College in a room overlooking Toronto's impressive ravines. I want to thank our keynote speakers, Kate Flint and Bernie Lightman, and our morning speakers, Ann-Barbara Graff, Lesley Higgins, and Jo Devereux, for their superb talks. I'm sure that others shared my desire to have a few additional hours to discuss the material that was raised during the day. A summary of the conference can be found in this Newsletter.

As most of you know, we have now moved our website from Ryerson University to York University (many thanks to Dennis Denisoff for maintaining it for so long at Ryerson and many thanks to David Latham for now maintaining it at York). The executive has taken this opportunity to rethink what the website offers our membership. In addition to our current topics, we are hoping in the future to develop the website as an informational hub for Victorianists in Ontario (posting talks, groups, and information of interest to local Victorianists). As usual, we're eager to hear suggestions from you. If there are certain things you'd like to see on the website please feel free to let us know.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have been involved in VSAO over the past year and done so much to help the organization to flourish. The VSAO executive is truly amazing:

Alison Halsall and David Latham, in addition to their roles as secretary and treasurer respectively, did the lion's share of conference organization; Martin Danahay brings out the Newsletter by turning a mish-mash of formats into a wonderfully coherent whole; Connie Crompton and Fiona Coll organized the ACCUTE panel and compiled the Victorianist panels at Congress (in this Newsletter); and past-president Anne Clendinning was always ready with much-needed advice and tips. Thank-you!

I'd like to wish everyone a restful and productive Summer.

All the best,  
Barbara

### **ACCUTE Panels of Interest to Victorianists**

Concordia University, May 28th – June 4th

Following is a summary of some of the panels at Congress 2010 that might be of interest to VSAO members.

#### **The VSAO panel, entitled “Victorian Systems,” is on Friday, May 28th, at 3:00 pm.**

The panels mentioned here focus on Victorian studies, for the most part, but a few panels have been listed because they include particularly interesting-looking individual papers. Please confirm time and location details in the final program. To get a full sense of the diversity of this year's offerings, consult the Congress website: <http://www.congress2010.ca/>

### **Abbreviations**

AASSC – Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada  
ACQL – Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures  
ACCUTE – Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English  
CATR – Canadian Association for Theatre Research  
CHA – Canadian Historical Association  
CSA – Canadian Sociological Association  
CSHM – Canadian Society for the History of Medicine  
CSHPS – Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science  
CWSA – Canadian Women's Studies Association  
HSAC – Hungarian Studies Association of Canada

### **Key to Rooms**

EV – Engineering Computer Science and Visual Arts Complex, 1515 St. Catherine W.  
H – Henry F. Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve W.  
LB – J.W. McConnell Building/Library Building, 1400 de Maisonneuve W.  
MB – John Molson School of Business, 1450 Guy.

**Friday, May 28th**

**9:00 – 10:30**

CSHM

**International Connections in Medical Culture**

Location: TBA

Mary Caesar (Queen's): "International Developments and the South African Social Medicine Experiment, 1940 – 1950: Inspiration and Critic"

Samantha Sandassie (Queen's) "On Pins, Needles and Electrotherapy: Acupuncture in Victorian Britain"

Deanne Van Tol (Queen's) "The Lady Grigg Welfare League for Child Welfare, Maternity and Nursing of All Races in Kenya, 1920-1940"

**9:00 – 10:45**

CSHPS

**Session C1**

Location: MB 2-265

Kristen A. Hardy: "Civilizing Knowledge: Victorian Science in *The Calcutta Review*"

Alison Butler: "Finding a Science: The Transformation of Victorian Occultism"

Sarah Kriger: "The Illusion of Intelligence: Technology, Conjuring, and Psychology in Nineteenth-Century London"

**10:45 – 11:45**

ACCUTE

**Canada, India, Ireland: National Anxieties and Colonial Rule**

Location: H 1070

Chair: Joel Faflak (UWO)

Julia Wright (Dalhousie): "'Tho' Glory Be Gone': Moore and the Problem of Colonial Masculinity"

Kate Lawson (Waterloo): "Indian Mutiny/English Mutiny: National Governance in Charlotte Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family*"

Morgan Vanek (Toronto): "Smollett's History of Canada: Refractions of Early Canada in *Humphrey Clinker*, *A Compendium of Authentic and Entertaining Voyages*, and *The British Magazine*"

**11:00 – 12:45**

CSHPS

**Session B2**

Location: MB 2-435

Andrew Fenton: "Chimpanzee knowledge and some implications for analytic naturalized epistemology"

Benoît Dubreuil: "Tracing the mechanism of the evolution of the mind"

Sheldon J. Chow: "Keeping Darwin in Mind"

**1:30 – 3:00**

CATR

## **Transcending Taboo Drama**

Location: MB 7.251

Moderator: S. Johnson

Heather Davis-Fisch (Brock): "Dickens' and Wilkie Collins' *The Frozen Deep* Responds to the Loss of the Franklin Expedition"

Naomi Moses (York): "Love in the Closet Drama: A Contextual Interpretation of Amy Redpath Roddick's *The Romance of a Princess*"

Dawn Tracey (Northwestern): "Safeness and the Puppet-As-Object"

**2:15-4:00**

CSHPS

### **Session A3**

Location: MB 2-255

Mike Stuart: "The Role of Henri Poincaré and Pierre Duhem in the Establishment of Conventionalism in Modern Philosophy of Science"

Nicolas McGinnis: "Simplicity and the Russell-Poincaré Debate"

Ken Corbett: "Constituting Time: Technology & Philosophical Attitudes Towards Time in Britain 1870-1900"

**3:00 – 4:15**

ACCUTE

Joint Session with the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

### **Victorian Systems**

Location: H 1220

Organizers: Fiona Coll (Toronto) and Connie Crompton (York)

Gregory Brophy (UWO): "Graphomania and the Graphical Method"

Robin Durnford (MSVU): "Galton's Computer: A Standard for Immortality in an Odd Victorian Text"

Janice Schroeder (Carleton): "Typical Deviants: School Systems and Schooled Subjects"

**4:15 – 5:30**

ACCUTE

### **Envisioning the Nineteenth-Century Social Machine**

Location: H 1252

Chair: Kate Lawson (Waterloo)

Judith Scholes (UBC): "Sympathy for the Reader: Godwin's Address to the Ethical in *Caleb Williams*"

Lynne Shakinovsky (WLU): "The Business of Death in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*"

**Saturday, May 29th**

**9:00 – 10:15**

ACCUTE

Joint Session with the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada

### **Victorians on the Web**

Location: H 1267

Organizer: Kristen Guest (UNBC)

Lorraine Janzen Kooistra (Ryerson)/Constance Crompton (York): "Electronic Scholarship's Back End:

The Epic/Epoch of *The Yellow Book* Online, Vol.I"

Susan Brown (Guelph): "All Dressed up to the NINES, but Where to Go?"

Michael Eberle-Sinatra (Montréal): "On Media and Technology: The Case of Leigh Hunt"

### **11:00 – 12:30**

HSAC

#### **Culture and Society in 19th & 20th-Century Hungary**

Location: MB 3-430

Eva Bodnar (Alberta): "Louis Kossuth's 1861 Banknote Trial in London"

Erzsebet Molnar (Miskolc): "Samuel Brassai the Linguist"

Oliver Botar (Manitoba): "Ernö Kállai, György Kepes and the Aestheticization of Scientific Photography after World War II"

### **11:00 – 12:45**

CSHPS

#### **Session F2**

Location: MB 2-265

Kathleen Okruhlik: "John Stuart Mill and the Democratization of Science"

Jacob Stegenga: "Varieties of Evidential Experience"

Josipa Petrunic: "What George Peacock's "Principle of the Permanence of Equivalent Forms" (1830) can tell about the generation of mathematical knowledge"

### **11:30 – 1:00**

CCLA

#### **Monstrosity and Literature II – Considerations of Gender**

Location: EV 3-645

Pouneh Saeedi: "Monsters and Mastication: the Case of Grendel and Zazhahk"

Jennifer Beauvais: "Men Gone Wild: Male Exclusivity in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*"

Natalie Pendergast: "Monstrous Things: Heroism in Comics"

### **1:30 – 2:45**

ACCUTE

Joint Session with North American Victorian Studies Association

#### **Victorian Liberal Education**

Location: H 1267

Organizer: Jason Camlot (Concordia)

Christopher Keep (UWO): "Machines, Mechanical Learning, and the Idea of the Humanities"

Christiane Gannon (Johns Hopkins): "The Civilizing Work of Instruction: The Arnolds and Victorian Debates about Reading and Education"

David Heckerl (St. Mary's): "Matthew Arnold's Troubled Education: Criticism, Culture, and the Right Love of Beauty"

**1:30 – 5:30**

Canadian Society for Aesthetics

**William Morris: Radicalism and Aesthetics**

Location: LB 553

Organizer: Michelle Weinroth (Ottawa)

Elizabeth Helsinger (U of Chicago): "William Morris: Latter-Day Songs"

David Latham (York): "Morris and the Politics of 'Antiquarian' Poetics"

Florence Boos (Iowa): "Art Amid Violence: The 'Lesser Arts' in Morris's Romances and Poetry"

Miles Tittle (Ottawa): "Last Illumination: The Meaning of William Morris's Pre-Raphaelite *Aeneid*"

Stephen Eisenman (Northwestern): "William Morris in Perspective"

David Mabb (Goldsmiths, U of London): "The Constructivists and the Appropriation of the Designs of William Morris"

John Plotz (Brandeis): "Response"

**2:00 – 3:30**

AASSC

**Session 3: Ibsen**

Location: EV 1 – 605

Chair: Gurli Woods (Carleton)

Sandra Saari (Rochester Institute of Technology): "The Face of Mopseman: Representation of the Compelling in Henrik Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*."

Errol Durbach (UBC): "The myth of the 'Paradise Garden' in *The Cherry Orchard*, *Miss Julie*, and *The Wild Duck*."

Elisabeth Klærbye (freelance teacher and lecturer, Denmark): "Relationships: Henrik Ibsen's Contemporary Drama, a study of romantic relationships."

**3:00 – 4:30**

ACCUTE

**Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetics**

Location: H 1145

Chair: Julia Wright (Dalhousie)

Patricia Rigg (Acadia): "'Tell me a story, dear, that is not true': Love, Transience, and Vernon Lee in A. Mary F. Robinson's *An Italian Garden*"

Jennifer O'Kell (Toronto): "Tableau of the Unbearable: Grief and Temporality in L.E.L.'s *The Troubadour*"

Lesley Newhook (Dalhousie): "Cementing Sororal Bonds and Superseding Double-Binds: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Women and Cultural Displacement"

Meagan Timney (Victoria): "Digital Collections, Archival Research, and Canonicity: The Working-Class Women Poets Collection"

ACCUTE

**The Substance of Language**

Location: H 1070

Chair: Lori Emerson (Colorado)

Andre Furlani (Concordia): “‘Open to View’: Samuel Beckett’s Dramaturgy and Wittgenstein”

Marc Plamondon (Nipissing): “Syzygy and Victorian Phonostylistics: Sylvester and Hake”

Glenn Deer (UBC): “Writing and Reading Around the Photograph: Fred Wah’s Photopoetics in *Sentenced to Light*”

Johanna Skibsrud (Montréal): “‘The fatal, dominant X’: Materiality and Poetic Liberation within the Poetry of Wallace Stevens”

**Sunday, May 30th**

**9:00 – 10:15**

ACCUTE

**Nineteenth-Century Sympathy**

Location: H 1269

Chair: TBA

Jeff King (UWO): “The Anxious Limit of Sympathetic Community in Wordsworth’s ‘Lucy Poems’”

Brittany Pladek (Toronto): “Society’s Surgeon: Charles Darwin and Medical Sympathy”

Jamie Paris (UBC): “On the Social Function of the Ugly in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*”

ACCUTE

**Collection, Consumption, and Gender**

Location: H 1220

Chair: Peter Schwenger (MSVU/UWO)

Nicola Nixon (Concordia): “Originality and its Discontents: Cather’s *The Professor’s House*”

Susie DeCoste (Waterloo): “Miniature and Melancholy in Elizabeth Bishop’s *Geography III*”

Stefania Forlini (Calgary): “Acts of Self-Possession: The Female Collector in Nineteenth-Century Fiction”

**9:00 – 10:30**

ACQL

**(Trans)nationalismes / (Trans)nationalisms**

Location: MB S1-430

Chair: Karis Shearer (McGill)

Melina Baum Singer (UWO): “Unhomely Moves: A Transnational Conversation between Schelling and Goldsmith”

Margo Gouley (York): “The Role of Metaphor in 19th Century Canadian Literary and Political Manifestoes”

David Gamble (UWO): "Utopian Nations: Connections among 1890s Utopian Literary Visions of the Future for Canada and Québec"

**10:30 – 12:00**

ACCUTE

**Imagining Bodies**

Location: H 1145

Chair: Lynn Shakinovsky (WLU)

Steven Bruhm (UWO): "On Having the Wilis: Uncanny Ballet"

Karen Macfarlane (MSVU): "Fu-Manchu's 'Strange Knowledge' "

Bruce Wyse (Waterloo): "Incommensurable Minds and Transmissible Texts: The Muse of Automatic Writing in *The Martian* and F.W.H. Myers"

Sandra Tomc (UBC): "Celebrity and the Deduction of the Visible"

CWSA

**Mapping Literary Lengths & Limits**

Location: H 605.00

Leah Claire Allen (Duke): "Postnationalism in Practice: Space in the Canadian Literary Landscape"

Amanda Lim (Alberta): "Speaking of Feminist Poetics: The Provisional and Positional Conversations of Lisa Robertson, Rita Wong, and Rachel Zolf"

Nancy Martin (Memorial): "Embodying the 'Fallen': An Exploration of the Female-authored Nineteenth-century Dramatic Monologue and the Sexually Transgressive Woman"

Sonja Boon (Memorial): "Epistolary Embodiment: Autobiographical Negotiations in Medical Consultation Letters to Samuel-Auguste Tissot"

**11:00 – 12:30**

CHA

**Colonial Anxieties / Anxiétés coloniales**

Location: H 427.00

Maxime Dagenais (Ottawa): "'My acts have been despotic, because my delegated authority was despotic.'" Lord Durham and the Special Council of Lower Canada, June to November 1838"

Kenton Scott Storey (Otago): "'Fire,' 'Murder,' and 'Indian Invasion': Interpreting a Manifestation of Colonial Anxiety in Victoria's British Colonist"

Megan Harvey, John Lutz and Kate Martin (Victoria): "Telling Stories about Race: Tracking 'The Yellow Peril' in Victoria, B.C., 1861-1910"

Victoria Freeman (Toronto): "Toronto Has No History!: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism and Historical Memory in Canada's Largest City"

**1:30 – 2:45**

ACCUTE

**Joint Session with the North American Victorian Studies Association  
Victorian Girls, Women, and Education**

Location: H 1070

Organizer: Jason Camlot (Concordia)



Sally Brooke Cameron (Concordia): "A Fellowship of Women: Olive Schreiner's Feminist Socialism"

Goldie Morgentaler (Lethbridge): "Mr Turveydrop's Academy: Dance and Dance Instruction in Victorian Literature"

Kristine Moruzi (Melbourne): "The Educated Girl in the Periodical Press"

**2:00 – 3:30**

CHA

**Stories of the Sinful South / Histoires du Sud pécheur**

Location: H 401.00

Lynn Kennedy (Lethbridge): "Telling Stories, Salacious & Salutory: Gossiping in the Antebellum South"

Marise Bachand (UWO): "How Overspending Ladies Challenged Southern Patriarchy"

Alice Taylor (Toronto): "Moral Consumers and the Anglo-American Free Produce Movement, 1830-1865"

**Monday, May 31st**

**9:00 – 10:15**

**ACCUTE – Joint Session with the North American Victorian Studies Association  
Fictional Forms of Victorian Education**

Location: H 1145

Organizer: Jason Camlot (Concordia)

Michelle Elleray (Guelph): "Educating William: Catechesis in *Masterman Ready*"

Khristina Gonzalez (Brown): "Education with a Vampire: Moral Perfectionism and the Victorian Gothic Villain"

Michelle Weinroth (Ottawa): "Morris, Translation, and the Politics of Education"

**9:00 – 10:30**

CHA

**Popular Politics / Politiques populaires**

Location: H 403.00

Kelly Bennett (Queen's): "The Cumings Sisters' Loyalists Sewing Shop: A Busy Site of Exchange and Popular Meeting Spot"

Jarrett Henderson (York): "Much to be thankful for [in Bermuda]: Negotiating Exile, British Subjectness, and Conditional Loyalty in Lower Canada"

Janet Miron (Trent): "'Disarming the White Settlers' in the Canadian North-West: Firearm Debates and Regulation in 1885"

Bradley Miller (Toronto): "State Power and Community Justice on the Border, 1842-1910"

CSA

**Historical Sociology, I**

Location: MB 5-245

Robin Ostow (Toronto): "Remembering and Forgetting at Pier 21"

Lindsay Parker (Alberta): “Between rest and wakefulness: the sleepwalker’s popular life and the construction of a medico-legal reality in the United Kingdom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries”

Kevin Walby (Carleton) and Mihael Hann (Alberta): “Caste Confusion: the Epistemological Problems of Census Enumeration in Colonial India, 1871-1921”

### **Forum: How Have Digital Media Changed Your Teaching?**

#### **Dennis Denisoff, Department of English, Ryerson University**

For the last decade, Victorian studies has been at the forefront of digital humanities scholarship. This might be because our archives are rotting more quickly than most. Or maybe the steam punksters amongst us are as excited by current technologies as we are by those of the Victorian age. Or perhaps it is because funding opportunities seem to be increasingly tied to how blatantly relevant one’s research is to today’s society and its economic developments. This last point would also explain why there appears to be relatively strong administrative support for the inclusion of digital media in our teaching.

Just this month, for example, Ryerson University’s Senate approved its very first humanities bachelor’s program – a BA in English. As the many hours of discussion and questioning we went through to get approval made apparent, the degree’s digital component was definitely a contributor to its success. The BA not only includes courses that teach literature in a digital age or make explicit use of new technology, but also has studio-size courses that teach students how to create digital sites that fulfill scholarly and editorial requirements. The BA does not launch until September 2011, but even now roughly a quarter of my department’s research assistants are working on digital humanities projects. We have six in the 1890s Digital Studio alone ([www.1890s.ca](http://www.1890s.ca)).

I am hopeful about this recent shift toward the integration of new media into the teaching of the Victorian era. I can imagine using digital tools, for example, to help students visualize what it was like to walk arm-in-arm with Sarah Bernhardt down some discrete Parisian alley; to hear nineteenth-century voices and gain a better sense of why poetry and drama from the period was written the way it was; to sit in on Walter Pater giving a lecture at Brasenose College. But, in all honesty, I don’t know much about what any of these experiences were really, historically, like in anything close to a visceral sense. Nor do I have the digital skills or knowledge to re-create any of these three scenarios on my own. I suspect, therefore, that the digital element in Victorian studies will for the next few years remain much as it has been for the past decade – a process of creating open-access sites that include editions of texts and innovative search tools (an immense accomplishment in itself).

What I look most forward to in this process is an increasing number of students who are engaged with new technology on more than the level of apps, students who are eager to work collaboratively to create interactive sites that will encourage further explorations of all things Victorian. It might in fact be the “intellectual excitement” of digital collaborative learning (to quote the author of *The Renaissance*) – “this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness”

– that comes closest to giving us the visceral experience of what it was like to learn with Pater.

**Leslie Howsam, University Professor**

**Department of History, University of Windsor**

Off and on since 1994, I have been teaching a fourth-year undergraduate history course at the University of Windsor called “Culture and Society in Victorian Britain.” It’s always been a challenge, because some of the students have not encountered British history before and I cannot take it for granted that they know what a Chartist was, or why Gladstone and Disraeli mattered. Even the basic outlines of industrialization, urbanization, and imperialism have to be sketched in, and twelve weeks is not very long. Nevertheless, the course has been consistently rewarding over the years, for me and (I hope) for many of the students. It has always been framed as an opportunity to engage in research, because the Leddy Library has a decent collection of printed primary sources in the form of Lives and Letters, collected papers of literary and political figures, essays, novels, and other materials. We have a few scattered volumes of periodicals, which I used to try to encourage students to use, but they found the problems of access and interpretation to be pretty formidable.

After a few years’ break from the course, I returned to teaching it in the winter semester of 2009, to find that the range of accessible primary sources, for the histories of all places and periods, had been enriched by the introduction of digital materials. Even manuscript archival materials were being digitized, but it was the automated application of Optical Character Recognition technology to the mountains of print surviving from the Victorians that was altogether remarkable. Much of this is in book form, of course, but as a member of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP) I had become particularly interested in the searchability of the online editions of the periodical press produced by ProQuest (British Periodicals I and II and the C19 Index) and Gale Cengage (19th-Century UK Periodicals). My current research focus, on the prevalence of historical discourse in the Victorian periodical press, is another aspect of this interest.

Through RSVP, I learned about the scholarship behind the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900* (edited by Walter Houghton et al, University of Toronto Press, 1966-1989) and the *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800-1900*, edited by John North in multiple volumes. I also came into contact with the scholarship of people like Margaret Beetham, Laurel Brake, and Kay Boardman, who emphasize the hybridity and formal qualities of the periodical press, as well as Patrick Leary, whose article “Googling the Victorians” (*JVC* 10:1, 2005) bridges the divide between print-based and digital research in this material. I even contributed to the most recent, and already indispensable, reference work in this area, the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism (DNCJ)*, edited by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (British Library, 2008, and accessible electronically through C19). The idea of bringing into the classroom this wealth of resources, all of it available online as well as in print, was intriguing. The management of the materials could be facilitated by developing a course website within CLEW (Collaboration and Learning

Environment Windsor), which is Windsor's online learning management and collaboration system.

This year, in the Winter 2010 iteration of the course, I have presented the students with a succession of short writing assignments: week by week, they are assigned four texts to read, and a 3-4 page commentary to write. Each writing assignment is based on a package of material, made available by links on the course website. They read (1) an article from a Victorian periodical; (2) the brief account of that periodical title found in *DNCJ*; (3) a scholarly journal article that relates to the subject of the primary article; and (4) a chapter from the collection of essays that we are using as a survey of the period (Colin Matthew, ed., *The Nineteenth Century*, OUP 2000). For example, the first assignment was an analysis of "The Great Exhibition and the Little One," which appeared in *Household Words* in July 1851. The background materials were the *DNCJ* account of *Household Words* by John Drew; an article by Sabine Clemm in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* (27:3, 2005) entitled "'Amidst the heterogeneous masses': Charles Dickens's *Household Words* and the Great Exhibition of 1851"; and Martin Daunt's chapter, "Society and Economic Life," in *The Nineteenth Century*.

Within the course formula, the subject-matter varies wildly: a couple of weeks after the canonical Dickens/*Household Words* combination, the students were bemused by an anonymous rebuke to mothers who lack domestic skills, published in the *Ladies' Treasury*; if they skipped that (students choose four of a total of seven possible assignments) they might instead have had to come to terms with twenty pages of Huxley in *Nineteenth Century* or a *Cornhill* essay by G.H. Lewes. The take-home examination is merely a fresh round of four texts and another commentary to write, this time with the opportunity to reflect a little more broadly on the period, including its periodical press, as a whole. Classroom time is devoted to discussion, which gets enlivened by as many visual images as I can find to help the students think about what they are reading.

The next time I teach "Culture and Society in Victorian Britain," I intend to incorporate an opportunity for students to do research by searching the periodical press databases themselves, rather than work with my pre-packaged sets of primary, secondary, and tertiary materials. I've learned, however, that the pick-a-topic-and-search approach is fraught with difficulty, even when I offer extensive assistance on an individual basis. The pilot version of the course, taught in Winter 2009, attempted to do exactly that. Some students enjoyed it, but the majority were not sufficiently familiar with the periodical press as a genre; nor were they conversant enough with Victorian ways of seeing the world to be very effective researchers. To search a body of primary sources using a set of Boolean terms is not like research in a library catalogue or a database of journal articles like Project Muse. A topic word like "women" or "empire" or "cities" will turn up a myriad of "hits" but no way to contextualize them, in terms of class, race, and gender, where they sit chronologically within a long period, or the journalistic genre in which the word is embedded. The experience to identify which materials are useful – and which are not – may not take a lifetime to learn, but it does take more than twelve weeks. The instructor must work hand-in-hand with each student – to select and refine the topic, and begin the process of research to select the appropriate materials. In the "packaged" primary sources I developed for this year's assignment, a *DNCJ* account

could help the student identify the authorship and readership of the article in question, and a scholarly essay and chapter could situate it for them in the dual context of past events and current historiography.

The challenge, for teaching the Victorian period by offering an electronic entrée to the Victorians' favourite media, is to help students navigate the monstrous range of the material. The reward will be to provide them with access to a rich body of sources, far beyond the print collections held in most Canadian university libraries. And I hope they will absorb another lesson: while the new media of our own day can certainly be used in historical scholarship, the technology of Boolean searching is neither the beginning of research nor an end in itself.

### **Summary of 2010 VSAO Conference Papers**

#### **Ann-Barbara Graff (Nipissing University): "Iconographies of Guilt: Three Facades of Eugene Aram"**

Ann- Barbara Graff traced the political and ethical emphases of three different representations of the trial and execution of Eugene Aram: a brief reference in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), Thomas Hood's poem "The Dream of Eugene Aram" (1831), and Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Eugene Aram* (1832). All three authors manipulated this case to fit their own ideological ends. Godwin emphasized the injustice of the case. Lytton altered the circumstances of the case to emphasize the role of reason and introduced a romance element to remove the focus from Aram, whereas Hood had focused on Aram's guilt. Reviewers found Lytton's was the most controversial, many reviewers finding his attempt to balance individual will and social forces disturbing.

#### **Jo Devereux (University of Western Ontario): "The Iconography of 'Happy England': Helen Allingham's Domestic Genre Paintings"**

Jo Devereux argued that Allingham's paintings, with their idealized images of rural English life, were more than merely sentimental pieces, but actually feminized and domesticated the landscape, particularly in their focus on female domestic labour. The women were icons of female duty and served to extend the feminine into an idealized image of rural England. Allingham's paintings were contrasted with John Everett Millais' "Bubbles" and Tennyson's "The Gardener's Daughter," which both encoded the male gaze in contrast with Allingham's feminized vision.

#### **Lesley Higgins (York University): "Pater and the 'Laws' of Victorian Iconography"**

Lesley Higgins examined iconic images of Pater in visual art and in comic operas such as *Patience*, contrasting the public image of Pater with his nuanced and evocative prose. In part because of his fluid identity in his prose, Higgins argued that there are no "iconic" representations of Pater. Pater's technique is best captured by the term "differencing," as he

subverted Victorian iconography and conducted a guerilla campaign against the shibboleths of history and objectivity.

**Kate Flint (Rutgers University): “Neo-Victorian Photography”**

It is difficult to do justice to Professor Flint’s paper in a short summary because the audience was presented with a dazzling array of Neo-Victorian images that raised fascinating questions about the relationship between contemporary reconstructions of Victorian iconography and methods and their Victorian forebears. She examined images from Peter McGough and David McDermott, Tom Hunter, John Dugdale, Yinka Shonibare, Tracey Moffatt, and Clare Strand. These images were poised ambiguously between reenactment and critique of Victorian values and could be seen as role playing, homage, or parody. The images recapitulated and reenacted Victorian iconography but also created a new visual vocabulary through the difference between them and their predecessors.

**Bernard Lightman (York University): “The Many Lives of Charles Darwin: Biographies and the Definitive Evolutionist”**

Again it is difficult to do justice to a long and nuanced paper as this in a short summary. Professor Lightman analyzed biographies by Francis Darwin, Charles Frederick Holder, Edward Poulton, L. C. Miall, and James Hutchison Stirling for the ways in which they consolidated or questioned the iconic image of Charles Darwin. The biographies published in the 20 years after his death established the iconic image of him as a “great man” of science. However, the process was not smooth or uniform and the different biographies show the terrain over which writers struggled to lay claim to his public image as professional scientist, champion of Natural Science, generous elder statesman, atheist, secular saint, or heroic seeker after truth. Ultimately Darwin became a symbol for science as a heroic endeavour and an instantly recognizable cultural icon.